

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims supercedes all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (*Currently Amended*) A process for vulcanization of a pneumatic tire comprising a tread portion, a pair of sidewall portions and a pair of bead portions, comprising:

venting a gas in a vulcanization mold received with an uncured product of the pneumatic tire at a position corresponding to the sidewall portion from a venting gap formed between two or more sub-rings of a side portion ring of the vulcanization mold in at least one location of the side portion ring in a radial direction of the tire so as to extend over a full circumference of the ring, and to extend across ~~[[the]]~~ a full width of the-side ring portion ~~[[and]]~~ so as to open to an outside of the mold, wherein an outer surface of the side ring portion defines an outer surface of the mold.

2. (*Currently Amended*) A vulcanization mold for a pneumatic tire comprising:

a tread ring comprised of plural segments reciprocatively displacing in a radial direction and contributing to shape a tread portion;

a pair of side portion rings mainly contributing to shape a pair of sidewall portions, and each comprised of two or more sub-rings; and

a bead portion ring contributing to shape a bead portion,

in which a venting gap is arranged between the two or more sub-rings in at least one location of the side portion ring in the radial direction so as to extend over a full circumference of the ring and pass through the ring from the inside toward the outside thereof, and to extend across ~~[[the]]~~ a full width of the side ring portion ~~[[and]]~~ so as to open to an outside of the mold, wherein an outer surface of the side ring portion defines an outer surface of the mold.

3. (*Previously Presented*) A vulcanization mold according to claim 2, wherein the venting gap is disposed where a bead guard of the pneumatic tire is formed for preventing rubbing with a rim flange.

4. *(Cancelled)*

5. *(Original)* A vulcanization mold according to claim 2, wherein the venting gap has a clearance of 10-30 μm .

6. *(Previously Presented)* A vulcanization mold according to claim 2, wherein a plurality of fine grooves introducing gas in the mold into the venting gap in an inner part of the side portion ring are arranged at both inward and outward sides with respect to the venting gap in the radial direction.

7. *(Previously Presented)* A vulcanization mold according to claim 2, wherein the sub-rings are positioned inward and outward in the radial direction and integrally united with each other.

8. *(Previously Presented)* A vulcanization mold according to claim 2, wherein the sub-rings are positioned inward and outward in the radial direction, and opposed surfaces of the sub-rings are slant faces inclining with respect to the radial direction, and at

least one of the sub-rings is energized by a spring or the like so as to enlarge the venting gap.

9. *(Previously Presented)* A vulcanization mold according to claim 7, wherein a chamfered portion or a notched portion communicating with the venting gap is arranged in a surface of at least one of the sub-rings contacting with the tire before the vulcanization.

10. *(Previously Presented)* A vulcanization mold according to claim 8, wherein a chamfered portion or a notched portion communicating with the venting gap is arranged in a surface of at least one of the sub-rings contacting with the tire before the vulcanization.

11. *(Previously Presented)* A process for vulcanization of a pneumatic tire comprising a tread portion, a pair of sidewall portions and a pair of bead portions using a vulcanization mold, comprising:

venting a gas in the vulcanization mold received with an uncured product of the pneumatic tire at a position corresponding to the sidewall portion from a venting gap formed between two or more sub-rings of a side portion ring of the vulcanization mold in at least one location of the side portion ring in a radial direction of the tire, the venting gap extending over a full circumference of the side portion ring and passing through the side portion ring from the inside toward the outside thereof,

wherein the sub-rings are placed inward and outward in the radial direction, and opposed surfaces of the mutual sub-rings are slant faces inclining with respect to the radial direction, and at least one sub-ring among these sub-rings is energized by a spring or the like so as to enlarge the venting gap.

12. *(Previously Presented)* A vulcanization mold according to claim 11, wherein a chamfered portion or a notched portion communicating with the venting gap is arranged in a surface of at least one sub-ring among the adjoining sub-rings placed inward and outward in the radial direction contacting with the tire before the vulcanization.

13. *(Previously Presented)* A vulcanization mold for a pneumatic tire comprising:
a tread ring comprised of plural segments reciprocatively displacing in a radial direction and contributing to shape a tread portion;
a pair of side portion rings mainly contributing to shape a pair of sidewall portions, and each comprised of two or more sub-rings; and
a bead portion ring contributing to shape a bead portion,
in which a venting gap is arranged between the two or more sub-rings in at least one location of the side portion ring in the radial direction so as to extend over a full circumference of the ring and pass through the ring from the inside toward the outside thereof,
wherein the sub-rings are positioned inward and outward in the radial direction, and opposed surfaces of the sub-rings are slant faces inclining with respect to the radial direction, and at least one of the sub-rings is energized by a spring or the like so as to enlarge the venting gap.

14. *(Previously Presented)* A vulcanization mold according to claim 13, wherein a chamfered portion or a notched portion communicating with the venting gap is

arranged in a surface of at least one of the sub-rings contacting with the tire before the vulcanization.

Please add the following new claims 15 and 16:

15. (New) A vulcanization mold for a pneumatic tire comprising:

a tread ring comprised of plural segments reciprocatively displacing in a radial direction and contributing to shape a tread portion;

a pair of side portion rings mainly contributing to shape a pair of sidewall portions, and each comprised of two or more sub-rings; and

a bead portion ring contributing to shape a bead portion,

in which a venting gap is arranged between the two or more sub-rings in at least one location of the side portion ring in the radial direction so as to extend over a full circumference of the ring and pass through the ring from the inside toward the outside thereof, and to extend across the side ring portion and open to an outside of the mold;

wherein the sub-rings are positioned inward and outward in the radial direction, and opposed surfaces of the sub-rings are slant faces inclining with respect to the radial direction, and at least one of the sub-rings is energized by a spring or the like so as to enlarge the venting gap.

16. (New) A vulcanization mold according to claim 15, wherein a chamfered portion or a notched portion communicating with the venting gap is arranged in a surface of at least one of the sub-rings contacting with the tire before the vulcanization.